

## A SOLDIER OF COMMERCE

BY JOHN ROE GORDON

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### CHAPTER III. THE BOAT ON THE KUR.

**A**T one of the wharfs on the Kur river, near Tiflis, a peculiarly shaped vessel lay moored. It was a substantial enough vessel for the purposes for which it was used—to convey merchandise from one port on the Caspian or its rivers to another. It had just brought a cargo of goods to the bazaar at the fair. It had a high curved prow, with a strange looking carving as a figurehead. It was broad amidships, and at the stern a high deck covered the cabin accommodations. It was manned by dusky sailors, and the captain was Hassan, a Turk from Constantinople.

Hassan was a man well along in years and had taken to the Caspian water trade as the best means of making sufficient wealth with which to settle down in his home at Stambul and enjoy himself. Unfortunately for Hassan the trade had not proved as profitable as he expected, because the Russian government had given rights and privileges—concessions they called them—to a German company to run a line of steamboats from port to port. Hassan's field of activity was therefore limited to those occasions when the fair at Tiflis or a sudden rush of goods to Astrakhan made the usual boats unable to accommodate the increase of trade.

A caravan from Trebizond had brought to one of the Caspian ports a vast amount of goods for the fair, and Hassan had succeeded in getting some of the overflow for his vessel. Having delivered these goods to the Persian, Russian, Jewish and Turkish merchants to whom they were assigned, he lay at the wharf trying to pick up a return cargo.

The night of the day on which Hafiz Effendi and Mizik, from Bokhara, had met, Hassan strolled on the upper deck at the stern of his vessel smoking a cigarette. He was disconsolate and was seriously contemplating leaving the river and getting back to the Caspian, for his chances of obtaining a cargo for any Caspian port seemed slight.

Suddenly a figure clad in a long black coat, bent and bearded like the usual trading Jew at the fair, stole from behind the shadow of a warehouse on the wharf and came cautiously toward the vessel. Hassan, bracing himself and pulling from the folds of his garments a dagger, advanced to the edge of the deck.

"What do you desire, stranger?" he asked loudly.

"In the name of Allah, hold your tongue!" came a reply in low tones. "It is I."

"By that voice I should say it was Hafiz Effendi," said Hassan hopefully, for he knew that if Hafiz Effendi had business that necessitated a disguise it would pay well.

"I am Hafiz," said the old slave trader as he walked upon the deck. "Are we alone?"

"Sufficiently alone to talk. The men are asleep."

"Let us sit down and talk. I have come with an offer that no man who is not a fool will refuse. Hassan, hast thou a wife?"

"Thou knowest well I have two."

"Are they well cared for?"

"I am poor and should have but one. I was once better supplied with wealth."

"As I thought, my friend. Allah be praised that you have so good a friend as I to think of you at a time when your purse could again be filled. How would you like to earn a thousand gold-pieces of 25 plasters each by taking a certain person down the Kur to the Caspian?"

"By the prophet's beard! A thousand pieces of gold! Hast thou come to make me rich?"

"It is that if what I ask is done. A thousand pieces of 25 plasters in gold."

"In the name of Allah, what cargo hast thou found?"

"A woman, one who will be a princess, Hassan. In Tiflis there is a certain young woman beautiful as a goddess. Like a marble statue is she. Pure white is her skin and like velvet. One caress from her lips would turn you from the Koran. She is desired in holy marriage by a certain prince."

"And she desires that I convey her to his palace?"

"Nay; she desires nothing. She does not even know."

"Why does not the prince ask her to accompany him to his palace?"

"For two reasons, Hassan. One is that the prince is not here and would not set his foot upon the dominions of the hated Muscovite. The other is that were he to do so the father of this young woman would spurn him, for the Muscovite does not regard his father as a king."

"Thou speakest either of the Khan of Khiva or his enemy, the ameer of

## Special Bargain Prices To All For The Next 15 Days

It is entirely in keeping with our usual policy to make this store pre-eminently the bargain headquarters during closing days of the summer season. During Re-union week we commenced the great underpricing of seasonable merchandise. The offerings will, if possible, be even more tempting than ever before. Read the foregoing:

### A Reduction on all Lawns

All lawns worth 25c, at..... 19c  
All lawns worth 20c, at..... 15c  
All lawns worth 15c, at..... 11 1-2c  
All lawns worth 12 1/2c, at..... 10c  
All lawns worth 10c, at..... 7 1-2c  
Fancy white goods worth 25c, at..... 19c  
Fancy white goods worth 20c, at..... 15c  
Fancy white goods worth 15c, at..... 11 1-2c

One lot of slippers, Nos. 2 1-2 to 4, former price \$1.50 to \$2.25, at 75c to \$1.25. 25 per cent off on all Ladies and Children's Slippers.

A lack of space and time will not permit of an elaborate enumeration of the many bargains that we will have to offer you, but suffice to say that they will more than meet your expectations.

## WRIGHT, GAMBLE & COMPANY.

Bokhara."

"It is of Bokhara I speak."

"That is sufficient. No good Muscovite would consent to that."

"But this young woman is not a Muscovite. She is a Georgian."

"Holla! That is different! A Georgian would sell his wife."

"This man will not. I have in the past tried to obtain from him the consent to the marriage of his daughter with a wealthy Osmanli. He will not consent."

"He hates us?"

"Perhaps. It is not that alone, but she loves a Muscovite, the hated Orskoff, that captain of the Muscovites who has watched us and prevented our trade. She loves him. I saw them together this very day."

"Is he rich?"

"I know not. I did not come to talk of him. But let us get to our business. Did you not sell to Ignatz Biartekis a certain portion of your cargo?"

"Allah! Mohammed! Is it the daughter of Biartekis of whom you speak?"

"The same. The prince of Bokhara desires her for his wife, and of my own knowledge she is promised to be the wife of Captain Orskoff. But we can secure the girl for the prince, and a thousand pieces of gold will fall mysteriously into your pocket."

"Oh, thou great and wily dealer in fair women, tell me how I can obtain this rich reward!"

"Is it not possible that somewhere in this vessel are goods that have been overlooked and that Biartekis would buy?"

"You mean—that I am to say that such is the case?"

"Exactly. You know that his daughter always accompanies him to purchase goods."

"I know. Well, what then?"

"Go to the bazaar. The hands are still playing. There is still life in the fair, for it is not yet midnight. Tell Biartekis that you have discovered some of the finest linen hidden in the bottom of the vessel and that you must start from here before morning, as an important business demands you at Astrakhan."

"By the beard! I know not what plan you have, but a thousand pieces of gold are not picked up in a year. What will you do in the meantime?"

"Await you here."

"Very well. I will go."

Hassan put aside his ordinary garments and replaced them with his best, which he always wore to the bazaar. He bade Hafiz adieu and walked away.

Ignatz Biartekis was about to close his bazaar when the well known figure of Hassan walked in.

"My friend," said Hassan, "I have come in a great hurry to see you. It could have been nothing but the great admiration I have for you and your lovely daughter that would bring me here at this hour. But as I was about to sail for the Caspian I discovered in

the bottom of my vessel bales of the finest linen—better even than I brought you last—from the looms of that far country in the north that makes the finest linen. It was not, like the last, assigned to you, but was placed on board for me to sell to any one who would purchase. I do not wish to tarry till the morning, for I have a cargo awaiting me at Astrakhan. I have already got my vessel in readiness to sail, and the men are having their last good sleep until we reach the Caspian. I thought of you, as you have been my friend. You have made many purchases. Will you not come and look at the linen, that I may at once set sail?"

"But it is night," said Biartekis. "In the morning I will see it."

"Nay, I cannot wait. I have just time to reach Astrakhan to take this cargo, which will be a rich one."

"I must call my daughter. It is her delight to accompany me and examine goods and make purchases."

He called Koura. Hassan gulped down an exclamation as he saw her beauty.

"What is it, father?"

"This good Hassan, who brought us some of our best goods, is about to start for the Caspian and has discovered in his vessel some of the finest linen he brought to sell. He asks that we go look at it. If we do not, some one else will get it. It is late, and the wharfs are dangerous. What do you say?"

"As for the lateness of the hour, it must not interfere with a good purchase. Hassan can walk the wharfs, and with him we should be safe."

"Well spoken," said Hassan.

They were soon ready to start. The streets of the fair were almost deserted. The last band had stopped its blare, and the lights were being extinguished in the bazaars. The coffee houses alone showed signs of life. The merchant accompanied Hassan to the wharf and on board his vessel. He led them to the cabin and offered wine.

Biartekis sat in the cabin and his daughter near him. Hassan, looking over the merchant's shoulder, saw the figure of Hafiz Effendi. He obeyed a signal.

"Permit me to depart and bring the linen," said he and walked out.

"It is strange, father," Koura was saying, "that I see no evidence that Hassan has made preparations to start. No sail is raised."

"He told me the men were taking a good sleep before starting. I believe."

A scarf was thrown around Koura's mouth and her eyes were blinded with folds of silk. She heard a groan from her father as Hafiz Effendi rushed upon him and buried a dagger in his heart.

"Quick! Fasten the girl! Bring me ropes!" he whispered to Hassan, who was horrified at the terrible act.

He realized that he was now in the power of Hafiz Effendi, for the murder had been done on his boat and he had

lured the merchant to his doom. He silently obeyed, and the girl was bound and placed upon a divan. Then with deft fingers they wound cloths around the body of the merchant, weighted it with stones and hurled it into the river.

"Now," said Hafiz Effendi in his blandest tones, "listen and obey the remainder of my commands."

"It is horrible!" said Hassan. "I did not think!"

"Harken, fool! If you are found with this girl on your boat, you will be shot. If Biartekis is missed, as he surely will be, who visited his bazaar to sell him linen that did not exist? It will be to your advantage to go, and go at once."

"I am in a trap," said Hassan desperately, "and must obey."

"Keep the girl where she will not be discovered. Sail as rapidly as possible to the Caspian and search for a vessel of the Persian type, which will be sailing without any direction or lying at anchor. Her master's name is Karakal. When you have found him, your

friend, it is to be 25,000 plasters in gold."

"Yes. In the name of Allah, yes. Go!"

He crept away in the shadows, and an hour later the long curved prow of Hassan's vessel divided the waters of the Kur, and with gathering speed the peculiar craft slipped silently from Tiflis.

### [TO BE CONTINUED]

### EATING AND DRINKING.

Results of an Excess of Food and the Effects of Fasting.

Every living body requires a quantity of food that is commensurate with the tissues it consumes in the performance of its functions. When nourishment is withheld, the body is forced to subsist on its own tissues. The fat is first appropriated, then the muscles and other structures. The emaciation and loss of strength are so rapid that life has rarely been maintained longer than ten days when neither food nor drink was taken. If, however, an abundance of water is drunk, the wasting is greatly retarded, and life can be supported for a much longer time, provided that the body be kept at complete rest. Thus restricted, fasting is often a valuable adjunct to other measures in the treatment of disease. A limitation of the diet is more frequently resorted to than an entire withdrawal of nourishment.

Restriction of diet is often valuable also as a means of preventing illness. Most persons not employed in manual labor eat more than is requisite for their support. Overeating seldom yields an increase of nutrition. The excess of food, on the contrary, imposes a burden upon the liver, kidneys and other organs whose office is to free the blood of effete matter. When this burden becomes excessive, illness is induced. Headache, loss of appetite, lassitude and all other symptoms commonly ascribed under the term "biliousness" are the usual manifestations of it. The accumulation of poisons is further favored by neglect of drink, when too little water is taken into the system to maintain the secretions and carry off the waste.

The waste products which result from an overindulgence in meat are more acutely poisonous than those from vegetables. They belong to the uric acid group of poisonous

substances, which are regarded as particularly active in the production of gout, rheumatism and neuralgia, or if the quantity of animal food taken be so excessive and remain so long in the intestines as to undergo decomposition through the action of bacteria, ptomaine poisoning is produced, and it may be so severe as to be distinguished with difficulty from typhoid fever.

In the less severe cases relief is promptly secured by abstaining from meat for a few days, hastening the removal of the toxic matter by the drinking of as much pure water as the stomach will tolerate or by means of a laxative mineral water. Muscular exercise and bathing are also advantageous for prevention.—Youth's Companion.

### His Recompense.

A popular physician was much pleased with a certain aerated water and by his assiduous recommendation procured for it a celebrity it justly deserved. The doctor acted solely in the interest of humanity generally and expected no return.

To his surprise there came one morning an effusive letter from the company, stating that his recommendations had done them so much good that they "had ventured to send him a hundred"—Here the page came to an end.

"This will never do," said the doctor. "It is very kind, but I couldn't think of accepting anything." Here he turned the page and found the sentence ran:

"Of our circulars for distribution."

### Dodging a Duke.

One time the aged Duke of Savoy, king of Cyprus and Jerusalem, was in love with the beautiful young Mme. de Valentinois, who had an estate at Monaco. Says the reminiscences of Mme. de Crequy: "He often came to Monaco without sound of trumpet or drum so as to give her an agreeable surprise. Mme. de Valentinois did not care in the least for her neighbor, who, moreover, was a septuagenarian and humpbacked like a sack of nuts. In order to put a stop to his visits she used to have his movements watched, and directly he passed her frontier he was saluted from all her batteries. Twenty-one guns was the precise number, sufficient to proclaim for miles around that his grace was taking an outing."



She heard a groan from her father.

duty is done. Deliver the girl into his hands and return to me for your reward."

"Is it to be a thousand pieces of gold of 25 plasters?"

"Yes. Go, for in the morning they will search for Biartekis."

"I will go. I must arrange for this girl. If she is to be the wife of a prince, she must be well treated."

"Look her in the room and feed her well. If she screams, you must bind up her mouth."

"I understand. You repeat, Hafiz Effendi."